

REMARKS

This is in response to the Official Action currently outstanding with respect to the above-identified application that the Examiner has designated as being a FINAL Official Action.

Claims 1-4 and 6-17 were present in this application as of the time of the issuance of the currently outstanding Official Action. By the foregoing Amendment, Applicants have proposed that Claims 1 and 14 be amended. Claim 1 is amended to correct a typographical error appearing in the version of claim 1 not showing the changes made thereto in the last amendment in this case. Claim 14 is amended solely for the purpose of more clearly and definitively stating the subject matter previously stated and/or inherent therein. No new claims have been added, and no claims have been deleted by the foregoing Amendment. Further, no new matter has been introduced into this application by the foregoing amendment. Accordingly, Claims 1-4 and 6-17 as amended will remain under active prosecution in this case in the event that the Examiner grants entry to the foregoing Amendment.

It is respectfully submitted that the foregoing amendment places this application in condition for allowance, or at least in better form for Appeal, as required by 37 CFR 1.116.

A "**VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE TO THE CLAIMS**" is attached as required by the Rules.

More specifically, it is noted that in the currently outstanding FINAL Official Action, the Examiner has:

1. Again acknowledged Applicants' claim for foreign priority under 35 USC 119(a)-(d), and indicated that the required certified copies of the priority document have been received by the United States Patent and Trademark Office.
2. Repeated his rejection of Claims 1-4, 6-10, 12 and 14-17 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Suzuki et al reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,923,013) in view of the Tanaka et al reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,682,549).
3. Repeated his rejection of Claim 11 as being unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) over the Suzuki et al reference in view the Tanaka et al reference, and further in view of the Morikawa reference (U.S. Patent No. 5,960,247).
4. Repeated his rejection of Claim 13 as being unpatentable under 35 USC 103(a) over the Suzuki et al reference in view the Tanaka et al reference, and further in view of the Kusumoto reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,088,135).
6. Indicated that Applicants' previous arguments with respect to Claims 1-4 and 6-17 have been considered, but are not deemed to be persuasive.

Further comment in these Remarks regarding items 1 and 2 above is not considered to be necessary.

As specifically indicated previously, Applicants respectfully submit that the dependent claims of this application, namely Claims 2-4, 6-13 and 15-17, are patentable and in condition for allowance at least by virtue of their respective dependency upon allowable independent Claims 1 or 14. Accordingly, additional detailed discussion of the patentability of these dependent claims is not believed to be required in these Remarks.

With respect to independent Claims 1 and 14, Applicants respectfully submit that the foregoing proposed typographical error correction to Claim 1, and clarification of the wording of Claim 14 introduce no new matter into this case and no feature not previously either expressly or inherently present in those claims. Accordingly, no new issue requiring further consideration and/or search is introduced by the foregoing amendment. Entry of the foregoing proposed amendment of Claims 1 and 14 in response to this communication, therefore, is respectfully requested.

With respect to the Examiner's substantive rejections, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has failed to appreciate the merit of the amendment and argument presented in response to his previous rejections. In particular, in the currently outstanding FINAL Official Action, the Examiner specifically states his disagreement with the Applicants' assertion that the Tanaka et al reference clearly does not teach, disclose or suggest the feature of the present invention that each image data input is managed by a management table on an image basis as each image data is inputted from the image data input means.

In particular, according to the Examiner, the Tanaka et al reference clearly discloses an image data management system for taking in information written on paper as image data and outputting the (presumably meaning "that") image data as individual data (relying on Tanaka, Column 1, lines 38-42), and inputting image data from an inputting device and determining whether a data format has already been registered in the input management table (relying upon Tanaka, Column 6, lines 41-51). From this, the Examiner concludes that in Tanaka image data is clearly being managed by a management table as each data is inputted (relying upon Tanaka, Column 6, line 41 to Column 7, line 13). Further, the Examiner suggests that numerous other reference points in the Tanaka specification not mentioned by the Applicants support this position.

Further, the Examiner suggests "Suzuki also discloses managing input data on an image basis as each image data is inputted from the input means". The Examiner supports this position by equating the Suzuki's disclosure of a contents management table 92 that manages print jobs both on a job description file basis and on a page data basis to the presently claimed management table that manages each input data on an image basis.

Addressing the Examiner's contentions regarding the Suzuki reference first, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner clearly has not established in any way that the management of print jobs on a job description file basis utilizing image data managed on a page data basis as disclosed by the Suzuki reference in any way reads on, teaches, discloses or suggests the management of image input data on an image basis as each input data is inputted from an input means. Indeed, the Suzuki reference is specifically directed to a management system for managing printing jobs on a job basis.

By this it is clearly meant that the Suzuki job description files determine which pages to print, determine the print attributes of the job such as the sequence in which pages will be printed, the number of copies of each page that will be printed, the print format and font that will be utilized, along with other similar variables, as well as retrieving from memory the content of each selected page (that content having been pre-stored as a distinct sequence grouping of image data). More simply, the Suzuki reference is premised upon the presence distinct units of page data pre-stored in memory that a job description file may utilize as a job element among other job elements in outputting a particular printing job. Hence, it will be understood that the Suzuki reference might be characterized as disclosing a job basis management table in the sense that it discloses the management of all of the variables associated with the printing of entire documents (usually of a multi-page nature). In addition, the Suzuki reference might be characterized as disclosing page basis printing in the sense the job description files disclosed selectively utilize pre-stored distinct page groupings of image data as job elements. (See Suzuki, Column 4, line 48, to Column 5, line 32)

Suzuki, however, clearly does not teach, disclose or suggest the management of each input data on an image basis either in terms of the manner in which image data is input or in terms of the manner in which image data is stored. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw in response to this communication as being factually in error his arguments attempting to equate Suzuki's managing of a print job on a job basis and a page basis with the present invention's managing of image data on an image basis as each image data is inputted from an input means.

With respect to the Examiner's comments concerning the Tanaka reference, Applicants do not dispute that Tanaka discloses a management table that manages individual input image data as it is inputted into the system therein disclosed. Applicants also do not dispute that Tanaka discloses the output of the individual data input on a document or on a page basis. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that the Examiner has failed to recognize, and/or completely disregarded, the fact that the Tanaka reference totally fails to teach, disclose or suggest the feature of the present invention that each image data input is managed by a management table on an image basis as each image data is inputted from the image data input means.

Thus, when properly understood, it is unambiguously clear that Tanaka contemplates the consecutive reading and processing of individual pieces of image data from a document (see Column 7, line 65 to Column 8, line 4). Further, Tanaka is similar to the Suzuki reference in the sense that all of the individual image data contained in each document of interest is stored in a main file memory. In Tanaka, however, instead of the individual image data being stored in distinct, pre-selected groupings representative of separate pages, slave files are created in which the location of each individual input data in the main file is stored. (See, Tanaka at Column 5, lines 50-67)

More specifically, in the Tanaka reference the input management table is utilized to associate a document name, a document page number, whether encryption is to be applied to the individual image input being processed, document access parameters and other information with each individual image input data. (See, Tanaka at Column 6, line 14 to Column 7, line 36) Therefore, it will be understood that the Tanaka reference manages each image input data either separately, on a page basis or on a document basis. Nowhere in Tanaka is it even remotely hinted that each image input data is, or should be, managed by the management table on an image basis.

As has been mentioned previously in this prosecution, these distinctions of the present invention from the prior art are important because they clearly indicate that the following features and advantages of the present invention also are not disclosed, taught or suggested by the cited art taken either alone or in combination.

(i) management table means for managing on an image basis each input data that also manages input completion information showing completion of an input of **each** input image data, and input request information showing a request for transmitting **each** input image data from the image processing means are managed in connection with **each** corresponding input image data stored in the image data storage means (as specifically disclosed in the present specification at page 40, lines 18-20 and at page 42, lines 12-25) ; and

(ii) management table means for managing on an image basis each input data that also manages output completion information showing completion of an output of **each** processed input image data which was processed by the image processing means, and output request information showing a request for outputting **each** processed input image data from the image output means are managed in connection with **each** corresponding input image data stored in the image data storing means (as specifically disclosed in the present specification at Page 40, lines 18-20, page 45, lines 2-7).

Specifically, with the above feature (i), if the input of images is interrupted by trouble, for example, it is possible to perform the instructed image processing with respect to image data of images which previous to the trouble had been completely inputted; to recognize which image data has not been inputted; and to give an instruction to restart the input and image processing of remaining images.

Hence, in the present invention, by managing input request information together with input completion information in a management table that manages the characteristics of each input image data on an image basis, the claimed device provides more accurate control measure capabilities than those disclosed, taught or suggested by the cited prior art (see, page 7, line 24 to page 8, line 7 of the present specification).

Further, with the above feature (ii), even in the case of trouble such as a jam in the image output section, a recovery in the output process can be made accurately while at the same time recalling how far the image processing has advanced. Hence, in the present invention, by managing output request information together with output completion information in a management table that manages the characteristics of each input image data on an image basis, the claimed device provides more accurate control measure capabilities than those disclosed, taught or suggested by the cited prior art (see, page 5, line 19 to page 6, line 8 of the present specification).

There is absolutely no teaching, disclosure or suggestion in either the Tanaka reference or the Suzuki reference of which Applicants are aware that in any way contemplates or otherwise would lead one skilled in the art to create a system such as the presently claimed invention wherein data input can be resumed from the point at which it left off (i.e., with the next succeeding incompletely inputted image on any given page) after encountering trouble such as a jam. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejections are improperly based upon hindsight reasoning starting from the teaching the present disclosure, and should be withdrawn.

In summary, therefore, it is respectfully submitted that upon reconsideration the Examiner will agree with the Applicants that the claims of this application as presented hereinabove are clearly patentable over the cited references. In particular, the cited references at best are concerned with the management and processing of input data on a complete page basis, on a document basis or perhaps even on the basis of each individual input data itself, **but not on an image basis** as herein claimed. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention is patentably distinct from the cited references, whether those references are considered alone or in combination with one another. Accordingly, reconsideration and a decision so holding in response to this communication are respectfully requested.

For each and all of the foregoing reasons, it is believed that the claims of this application as they will stand assuming the entry of the foregoing Amendment are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of this application and the allowance of Claims 1-4 and 6-17 as so amended in response to this communication, therefore, are respectfully requested.

Applicants believe that additional fees are not required in connection with the consideration of this response to the currently outstanding Official Action. However, if for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, you are hereby authorized and requested to charge and/or credit Deposit Account No. **04-1105**, as necessary, for the correct payment of all fees which may be due in connection with the filing and consideration of this communication.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION SHOWING CHANGES MADE TO AMENDED CLAIMS

Additions shown underlined; Deletions shown in brackets.

Please amend Claims 1 and 14 as follows:

1. (Five Times Amended) An image processing device which comprises image data input means for inputting image data, image data storage means for storing input image data received from said image data input means, image data confirmation means for confirming characteristics of each input image data, management table means for managing on an image basis as each image data is inputted from the image data input means the characteristics of each input image data confirmed by said image data confirmation means as management information of said each input image data with reference to the corresponding each input image data stored in said image data storage means, and image processing means for performing image processing with respect to said each input image data,

wherein:

said management table means manages input request information indicative of a request for transmitting each processed input image data from said image processing means, and input completion information indicative of the completion of an input of said each input image data responsive to said request in connection with the corresponding each input image data stored in said image data storage means.

14. (Four Times Amended) An image processing device, comprising:

image data input means for inputting image data;

[image data input management table means for managing each input image data on an image basis as each image data is inputted from the image data input means;].

first image data storage means for storing each input image data;

image processing means for carrying out image processing with respect to each input[ted] image data;

second image data storage means for storing each processed input image data obtained by performing image processing with respect to said each input image data by said image processing means; and

[input request information/input completion information/processing completion information] management table means for (i) managing each input image data on an image basis as each image data is inputted from the image data input means, (ii) managing input request information indicative of a request for transmitting each processed input image data from said image processing means, [and] (iii) managing input completion information indicative of the completion of an input of said each input image data in connection with the corresponding each input image data stored in said first image data storage means, and [for] (iv) managing processing completion information indicative of the completion of image processing with respect to said each input image data by said image processing means in connection with the corresponding each processed input image data stored in said second image data storage means.